

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee,  
Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee  
Conference on

*‘Coast Guard Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2003’*

Tuesday, May 11, 2004  
2:15 p.m., Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN CHRISTOPHER COX

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Let me begin by commending Senator McCain, Senator Hollings, Congressman Young and Congressman Oberstar for sponsoring this important piece of legislation before us today. I am here because of my role as Chairman of the Select Committee on Homeland Security. There are three Homeland Security Committee members on this conference because the Coast Guard and the security of the Maritime Transportation System are critical components of the Homeland Security effort. I want all my colleagues to know I am honored to be afforded the opportunity to take part in this conference.

When the Coast Guard joined the Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003, it brought invaluable experience and expertise. Under the Homeland Security Act, the Department itself is now charged with “Securing the borders, territorial waters, ports, terminals, waterways, and air, land, and sea transportation systems of the United States.” The Coast

Guard's experience and expertise is the anchor of the Department's Maritime Homeland Security effort.

In order to fulfill its new mission, there is a need to effectively coordinate the specific homeland security missions of the Coast Guard with other Department of Homeland Security programs and activities.

The Coast Guard's maritime and port security functions naturally overlap with the activities of the Department's Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the work of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the as yet unexercised authorities of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). New legislation that affects these critical and related functions must be written with a full consideration of the overall mission of the Department.

I know that this conference will not fail to focus on the "big picture". Whenever we produce authorizing legislation for any single component of the Department, such as the Coast Guard, it is absolutely essential that we take into consideration the impact on the Department and the homeland security mission at large. Of course, this legislation before us also relates to other Coast Guard programs, policies, and activities outside the realm of Homeland Security. But my specific intent, Mr. Chairman, is that the final legislation that emerges from this conference ensures consistency within the

Department, avoids duplication of resources and efforts, and eliminates barriers to cooperation and information sharing across the various components of the Department of Homeland Security.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in both the House and Senate and thank them for opportunity to participate in this conference.